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CHRISTOLOGY, THEOLOGY, & EVOLUTION IN CELIA DEANE-DRUMMOND'S
CHRIST AND EVOLUTION

by

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A Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Theology-Seminary of Saint John's
University, Collegeville, Minnesota, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Systematic Theology.

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY-SEMINARY
Saint John's University
Collegeville, Minnesota

July 31, 2014

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Dr. William Cahoy
Director

CHRISTOLOGY, THEOLOGY, & EVOLUTION IN CELIA DEANE-DRUMMOND'S
CHRIST AND EVOLUTION

Description:

This paper explores the relationship between theology and biological understandings of evolution. This paper explores some of the major themes in theology as they relate to contemporary observation of the natural world in biology. By this paper, I hope to highlight kenosis and eschatology as two theological foci that can aid in the discussion between biological evolution and contemporary theology.

This paper may be duplicated.

July 31, 2014

The intensity of political debate and media coverage concerning the teaching of creationism and evolutionism within the U.S. public school system is a sign of a grave misunderstanding today of the relationship between theology and the natural sciences. Most U.S. citizens appear to lack significant theological understanding of how God can relate to nature apart from miraculous healings or interventions that seem to signal, if not commence, the end of the world. Not surprisingly, most of us also seem incapable of actually articulating our own understanding of ourselves in relation to the natural world around us in any helpful terms. Against such a 'cultural' backdrop, any Catholic approach to the conversation between theology and the natural sciences, especially biological evolution, has often been completely overlooked. This paper will examine in detail one particular Catholic theologian-biologist's perspective on the relationship between theology and biological evolution. Celia Deane-Drummond in her book, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, seeks to keep the two disciplines distinct in a way that allows each to be seen clearly within the whole range of complexities within its own field of inquiry, let alone between the two fields. She uses the traditionally philosophical language of wonder and wisdom as the font and dialogue for their fruitful contact with one another. I will show how Deane-Drummond understands and incorporates this approach by looking at both theology and evolution in terms of drama. For her, the most fruitful understanding of theology in relation to biological evolution comes about through an investigation into the beauty of both nature and Christ in the theodrama of the kenotic, loving action of God as witnessed in the Passion of Jesus.

Over the past few decades, there have been multiple authors who have attempted to articulate the various approaches concerning how to treat the relationship between theological inquiry and the various natural sciences. These approaches can range from deep antagonism to

integrated syncretism, or even to the view that the two should be kept *utterly* separate. John Haught is a scientist-theologian who has attempted to name the ways of understanding this complex relationship between the disciplines. Haught lays out five major approaches to the dialogue between theology and the natural sciences: conflation, conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation.¹ The conflation approach often mixes or confuses theology and the sciences in a way that does not do justice to either discipline. The conflict approach often goes to the other extreme of emphasizing the unresolvable tensions between the two disciplines of study. The contrast approach responds to conflation and conflict with a sense that recognizes the legitimacy of both theology and the natural sciences, believing that they answer two different types of questions. Theology asks the ultimate ‘why’ question whereas the natural sciences ask the basic ‘how’ question. The contact approach says that, along with maintaining the distinctions of each realm of study, scholars can find fruitful dialogue and even points of ‘contact’ between theological inquiry and scientific theorizing or analyses. Finally, when a scholar in one of the two disciplines finds good reason, within her own discipline, to confirm either the other discipline itself or some particular finding within it, we see an example of the confirmation approach. Haught sees confirmation only happening *from* theologians *for* the natural sciences since theology must engage the basic relational question concerning God and *nature* before, and while, considering the properly theological questions that often reach beyond purely natural considerations. In terms of his own preferred method of approach, Haught says, “I shall be advocating, therefore, what may be called the *contact* approach as the one that a theology of nature must follow most closely. Contact forbids any confusion of science with religion, but it also recognizes that it is impossible to isolate theology absolutely from the results of scientific

¹ John Haught. *Christianity and Science: Toward a Theology of Nature*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 116-132. I’ll draw upon these pages in the subsequent summary of the five approaches.

discovery.”² Haught emphasizes the importance of theology reflecting upon nature and upon the “results of scientific discovery” while maintaining the important contrasts between the two fields of study. Though here he speaks in terms of all the natural sciences, Haught will also use the contact approach in consideration of theology’s more specific relationship with biological evolution in particular. Celia Deane-Drummond’s approach also appears to fit best into the contact approach when looking to theology’s relationship with the study of biological evolution. Nevertheless, Drummond differs from Haught in her way of looking at theology’s relation to biological evolution by more readily emphasizing complexity and the unknown in both realms of study. She writes, “I also have taken rather more liberty to discuss controversy within scientific discourse, in that I believe it is helpful to recognize that we are not dealing with a single partner; rather, those engaged in dialogue are themselves riven in sharp debates with one another.”³ Although in the above quotation Deane-Drummond is speaking primarily in terms of intra-scientific controversy, a nearly identical situation can be seen in contemporary theological discourse as seen in her discussion of the distinct, though not utterly disconnected, views of theologians such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Jürgen Moltmann, Karl Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. For her, both theologians and natural scientists must be careful to remember the internal critique within, and dialogical character of, the scholarly community of their own discipline before attempting to form any grand ‘theology of nature.’ Therefore, she emphasizes approaching the relationship between theology and biological evolution from a well-articulated position *from the core of one’s own discipline* (recognizing that one is already in dialogue with others in the one’s own field), and *then* reflecting upon the other discipline by means of the

² Haught, 119.

³ Celia Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), xiii.

(more) philosophical categories of wonder and wisdom. Deane-Drummond finds that a healthy relationship between theology and biological evolution is one that first sincerely admits the complexities and distinctions within one's own discipline and then approaches the other by means of deep common philosophical reflection. Her Christological approach will exemplify her position on the relationship between theology and the sciences by zeroing in upon Christology's relationship with biological evolution.

Celia Deane-Drummond sees much fruit for the conversation between biological evolution and theology in a deeply Christological approach that explores wonder and wisdom. Considering the overall task of her book, *Christ and Evolution*, she writes,

The premise of this book is that there is much more to be said about evolution and Christianity than simply taking the path of *either* friendship *or* hostility toward Darwin. Moreover, such debates regularly miss or push to the background proper consideration of that central tenet of Christian theology, namely, our understanding of the place and significance of Christ, or Christology.⁴

For sincere discussion with biological evolution, Deane-Drummond says that one must come prepared from the core of Christian theology, that is, our understanding of the person of Jesus Christ. What is immediately evident from her words is that she does not want a Christian theology reduced merely to biological-evolutionary interpretation and terminology. A fruitful conversation can only happen when the entire meaning of *Christian* theological reflection is offered with full integrity. She continues, "I, too, seek to widen the agenda for Christology so that it serves as more than just a focus on the incarnation narrowly conceived and includes reflection on the atonement and eschatology, as well as weaving in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, so that Christology is interpreted in a Trinitarian way."⁵ Deane-Drummond does not consider Christology to be narrowly focused on the person of Christ as if there were a strict

⁴ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, xii.

⁵ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, xiii.

demarcation or separation between the fullness of divine-Trinitarian life and action present through the person, words, and deeds of Christ. What, I believe, she hopes to avoid is any approach where the Trinity is seen as somehow extrinsic to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Yet, how one approaches Christology from this perspective is crucial. It is here that Deane-Drummond, a biologist herself, reflects upon the more philosophical themes of wonder and wisdom in order to guide her Christological approach so that she might deepen the dialogue and interaction between theology and biological evolution. She believes wonder and wisdom have stimulated and continue to enliven not only the former, but also the latter in terms of research and growth of understanding. She writes, “I prefer to see the meeting of the ways as a mutual seeking after wonder and wisdom in both, as a *shared task* that unites and respects difference, seeking to influence instead of bringing union, rather than promoting any special preference for the other, that is, a special preference of science for Christology and vice versa.”⁶ It is in this shared task that theology and biological evolution are able to reach each other in a way that will be mutually beneficial since it comes out of the core that animates both theologians and biologists alike. Deane-Drummond uses these categories in various ways throughout the book in order to highlight the mutual benefit gained. Ultimately, she finds that a theodramatic Christology is most fruitful in seeking after wonder and wisdom in relation to biological evolution.

Deane-Drummond uses a theodramatic approach to Christology because it is able to reach beyond more narrowly confined understandings of both Christ and nature. Out of her own reflection upon the theologies of evolution in John Haught, Karl Rahner, and Teilhard de Chardin, she finds that these three can tend toward an “interweaving of evolution and theology

⁶ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, xiii, ff.8.

through historical narrative, viewing the history of nature as a story to be told in a way that is comparable to the human story.”⁷ Such a heavy emphasis upon the history of nature as a story can focus primarily on human nature rather than on God’s relation to human nature through the person of Christ. Of course, I believe that Haught, Rahner, and Teilhard would all underscore that there is no truly “pure nature” that is revealed in history, but rather that nature is revelatory of the effects of God’s action in creation, at least analogously. Nevertheless, within the focus upon the history of human nature in terms of historical narrative we find a heavy emphasis upon the *human* story. Human beings, as made in the image and likeness of God, must look first to the One of whom they are a likeness in order to understand more deeply both their own image and its true Source. A theology reflecting upon wonder and wisdom, for Deane-Drummond, must then begin from reflection upon God’s action in the world through the revelation of Christ who shows forth the more *theodramatic* Trinitarian (prior) action in and for the world. She writes,

A theodramatic approach will always be in one sense eschatological in orientation. Attention to drama draws out the specific significance of human agency, the particular context, and the also the wider plot or time dimension. Consideration will therefore include that of the *subjects* themselves; the acting area in which they perform, or the *stage*; and the movement of the play, or action. Another key issue that arises here is that of freedom and what this means in the Christian life.⁸

In a theodrama, every person and part is contextualized, expanded, particularized, and placed upon a new, more open-ended perspective since the main focus is God, who, in being *beyond* and most deeply *within* all things, radicalizes every relationship within the world beyond mere time and space. Yet, to focus upon theodrama is also to focus also upon God, and the particularity of God’s action in the world. Such a focus on particularity and God’s own freedom in such action sheds light upon human particularity and freedom. God who is beyond history acts

⁷ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 49.

⁸ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 49-50.

freely and without coercion for the sake of realizing the fullness of life for those who are given the opportunity to be themselves in full human freedom. Yet, Deane-Drummond wants us to focus upon not merely human history but also the entire “evolutionary history,” which includes “viewing other evolved creatures as more than simply the stage on which human action and freedom are worked out.”⁹ The “contact” approach can clearly be seen here when we are considering the wider evolutionary perspective as it informs and expands our theological reflection to a deeper sense of *wonder* by including all of creation. She continues, “Of course, the degree of awareness of divine action will be different according to different levels of consciousness and capacity for decision, but if creatures are placed in kinship with humanity, the evolution of life becomes an integral aspect of the drama between God and God’s creatures.”¹⁰ The awareness of the integrated relationship between creatures, as shown in the evolution of life, shows their intimate closeness in all their diversity and interrelatedness in the deep plan of God’s creation. Even a theodramatic account raises our awareness and wonder of all possibilities, and thus contributes to how one can understand evolution as well. Deane-Drummond writes,

The difficulty, of course, when it comes to the millions of years of evolutionary history, is that human imagination finds it hard to appreciate the dynamics of the particular in any given “scene” of the drama. Also, given that evolution takes place over a long period of time, the “play,” if it is to do justice to the individual characters concerned, will find itself dealing with long epochs of history when such characters have come and gone in different scenes presented.¹¹

What she proposes then is that biologists look to particular creatures in earlier stages of evolution that have not have survived yet who give us a better sense of the particularity in the midst of the whole, thus more accurately showing forth the struggles of early creatures who may have no line

⁹ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 50.

¹⁰ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 50.

¹¹ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 50.

to living creatures today in a direct way.¹² She believes that “by focusing on the punctuated phases of evolution where improbable events came together in a way that means only one lineage survived and not others” we are better able to see the dramatic character of evolution, especially in its tragic quality.¹³ Drama here is not simply another word for conflict, but rather tension with uncertainty, even often containing at least some form of hope. Deane-Drummond thus finds that evolution is more properly understood as drama rather than narrative. Drama provides a better fit for an evolutionary perspective in being able to account for major tragic shifts through understanding those creatures who suffered by such shifts in all their particularity, without their being ‘subsumed’ into the ultimate ‘resolve’ of the narrative. Likewise, she writes,

A theodramatic approach takes proper account of the tragic, one that is vivid in terms of the evolutionary history of the earth, but now brings this into juxtaposition with an understanding of how God works in the tragic in human history. It therefore will resist any generalization of evil or attempt to wash over the contingency of events.¹⁴

The theodramatic focus upon evolution will highlight the fact that God takes account of the poorest among us. God truly hears the cry of the poor, the (otherwise) forgotten, the suffering, and the abandoned. There can no true ‘resolution’ that takes little or no account of those who are first in the Kingdom of Heaven, the littlest ones upon whom God’s favor rests. The theodramatic account thus sheds similar light upon the tragic character that comes about through the drama of evolution. Yet, drama focuses upon much more than simply the tragic character of events. Drama can offer a wide variety of moods, and shifts within the whole. The major figure who influences Deane-Drummond’s thoughts on theodrama is the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. In terms of how the theodramatic understanding of history allows for a deeper sense of wisdom, she offers the following quotation from him.

¹² Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 50.

¹³ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 51.

¹⁴ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 51.

It so overarches everything, from beginning to end, that there is no standpoint from which we could observe and portray events as if we were uninvolved narrators of an epic. By wanting to find such an external standpoint, allegedly because it will enable us to evaluate the events objectively (*sine ira et studio*), we put ourselves outside the drama, which has already drawn all truth and all objectivity into itself. In this play, all the spectators must eventually become fellow actors, whether they wish to or not.¹⁵

The theodramatic approach to history recognizes that there is no place from which human beings can stand in a perfectly ‘objective’ manner that allows for any absolute resolution of opposites or any historical overcoming of the particular beings within history. What seems inherent within this dramatic approach, both for biological evolution and theology in reflection upon history, is a sense of humility before the grandeur of what human beings encounter while reflecting upon their experience of the world around them, whether that be through prayerful theological reflection or through the desire to know that animates the application of methodical scientific inquiry by human beings. Deane-Drummond’s use of wonder and wisdom are clearly part of what lies behind her focus upon drama in her articulation of the approach that best facilitates the relationship between theology and biological evolution. Yet, how does such an approach of wonder and wisdom in the theodrama show itself forth at its central point in Christology?

For Deane-Drummond, both wonder and wisdom are shown as fonts for reflection upon, and as points of contact with, the evolutionary movement of life by contemporary Christological theologies of beauty and of wisdom (*sophia*). Her presentation of wonder in the world comes through the theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar. She writes,

Beauty, for Balthasar, is not so much the subject’s judgment of taste, but a response to the form of reality perceived, holding to Aristotelian realism that supposes form radiates being. In theological terms, beauty finds its expression as glory. The link with theology is grounded in a Johannine interpretation of the doctrine of creation and the incarnation, so

¹⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar. *Theo-Drama*, vol. 2, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 54, cited by Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 50.

that the Word breaks the divine silence, speaking first in the creation of the cosmos and then in the incarnation.¹⁶

As can be seen here, in Balthasar there is a double movement of the objectivity of beauty “as glory” that comes to the human perceiver by means of the Word in both creation and incarnation. Beauty is thus not ‘in the eye of the beholder,’ but rather is ‘shown forth’ by the forms of objects in created nature and in what Balthasar refers to when speaking of the form of Christ. Speaking first of the revelation of beauty as glory as shone through created nature in Balthasar’s theological aesthetics, Deane-Drummond explains,

[I]t is not simply a pointing to a form beyond itself, but “form is the apparition of this mystery, and reveals it while, naturally, at the same time, protecting and veiling it.” Such categories of form apply both to artistic expression and to beauty as found in the natural world, so that form is found within it rather than simply behind it.¹⁷

The form of the perceived beauty from the natural world reveals to the perceiver the deeper mystery within its own being as a created beauty. The given object is perceptible through its intelligible form. We see the object as beautiful, almost seemingly ‘giving of itself,’ while also revealing that which has yet-to-be-fully-revealed by its own “protecting and veiling.” It is not as if the “beautiful” is some object to be coveted and able to be ‘captured.’ There is, in the revelation of beauty through a created natural object, an ever-deeper mystery open to the perceiver of the beautiful as that form is unveiled and perceived. The unveiling of the form of created beautiful object, in Deane-Drummond’s words, “points to participation of the creature with God in such a way that leads to increasing awe.”¹⁸ The revelation of beauty through the natural object of beauty shows forth to the perceiver a deeper interconnectedness of being and

¹⁶ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 130-131. She is paraphrasing here from Balthasar’s *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form*, trans. E. Leivá-Merikakis (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 19-20, 28. Hereafter, I will cite this as *GL* 1.

¹⁷ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 131-132. Interior quotation from *GL* 1, 151.

¹⁸ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 131.

the participation of the object, and thus also the perceiver, in the mystery of God who is the Source of all being. Yet, it is important to remember that “Balthasar argues that it was only because of sin that the Word became an external word,” for even “that which comes as “natural inspiration...is “the locus and vessel of God’s inspiration by grace””¹⁹ Deane-Drummond thus understands Balthasar to be expressing the form of beauty in nature as a less ‘visible’ form than that which comes in the Incarnation, while still remaining connected to the Trinitarian action that unveils mysteriously through creation itself. At this point, it seems pertinent to raise the question of whether and how such beauty is properly “Christological.” If human beings were able to ‘see’ and perceive such natural beauty prior to Christ’s temporal incarnate “entrance” into human perceptibility in time and space (as we understand “the Word made flesh” in Jesus), then can this natural beauty still be primarily Christological? An initial thought might be that such natural beauty is the ‘positive imprint’ that contains the ‘negative’ image of Christ (that which outlines the ‘space’ intimated by beauty’s own interior mysterious depth which both unveils itself while still awaiting fulfillment). Deane-Drummond cites Balthasar as comparing such natural beauty to the wisdom (sophia) revealed in the biblical Wisdom literature, yet always keeping in mind that the “wisdom at work in the cosmos is more than simply the wise ordering of the created world, a position that Balthasar believes is deistic. “Rather, it is the presence of the creating and graciously providential God in all worldly form.””²⁰ God, for Balthasar and Deane-Drummond, is not a God who set the world’s order and evolution to play out like a complexly-ordered machine that runs its course throughout historical time. Instead, God is more like the most intimate Source of all being and all beauty in every created part of the world. God is neither

¹⁹ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 135. Interior quotation from *GL* 1, 452.

²⁰ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 135. Interior quotation from *GL* 1, 454.

subsumed into nature nor equivalent with it. It is in the form of Christ that beauty is revealed most concretely and mysteriously as consonant with the natural form of beauty.

Deane-Drummond presents Balthasar's form of Christ as the 'wondrous' revelation of divine-human beauty as found at the intimate depths of God's Trinitarian kenotic love that redeems humanity, and fulfills *all* creation in Jesus Christ. The importance of the previous examination of natural beauty becomes clearer when the form of Christ comes to the light:

[R]evelation in Christ does not come simply alongside creation, as if in competition with it, but rather appears *within* it, showing Christ's uniqueness through his ordinariness. ...the human and the divine in Christ are united such that there is nothing human that is not the utterance and expression of the divine and nothing divine that is not revealed and communicated to us in human terms. Such a combination applies to the public acts of Jesus historically as well as to his inner life of obedience.²¹

The revelation of beauty in creation is deeply interrelated with the revelation of Jesus Christ firstly because he is fully human in all particularity and normalcy. Yet, as shown in the quotation above, the full humanity and full divinity of Jesus not only reflect the natures one-to-the-other (an analogy to our human perception of beauty in creation as ever-revealing and ever-concealing mystery), but "revelation in Christ appears *within* [creation]." There is a tying together of the divine Mystery within the created mystery, and the created mystery within the divine Mystery even in the two natures of Christ. And, as stated above also, Jesus' public acts reveal then something of his inner life of obedience. And such a life of obedience, for Balthasar, is always in reference to the intra-Trinitarian mystery of kenotic love into which the world is invited through the salvation wrought in Jesus Christ's Passion and Death. "God's self-revelation, precisely at the point where it goes to the Cross and Hell, must knock down before it all innerworldly concepts of the beautiful, and then, by transcending them in a sovereign manner, give them norm

²¹ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 138. The first sentence is her paraphrase taken from *GL* 1, 450.

and fulfilment.”²² It is at this most intense ‘ugliness’ and abandonment during Christ’s Passion and descent into Hell when the theodrama shows most clearly how divine-humanity’s self-emptying love pours out perfect intra-Trinitarian love, the Source of all created beauty. Deane-Drummond points out that it is this “form” of self-emptying, kenotic love that is the true form grounding all intra-worldly beauty in Balthasar’s account.²³ It is out of the kenotic love of God in Christ’s Passion and descent into Hell that the darkness of all evil and suffering hit their peak.

Deane-Drummond writes,

Yet, concerning *what* Balthasar claims Christ to have carried on the cross, it is the load of the world’s No to God—that is, an existential acceptance by Christ, rather than being imposed from the outside, so that there is “an inner appropriation of what is ungodly and hostile to God, and identification with that darkness of alienation from God into which the sinner falls as a result of his No.”²⁴

In Christ, God takes on the whole ‘No’ of humanity toward God from within. It is not something taken on externally, but rather born freely within the Incarnate Son of God. Deane-Drummond wants to show how the evolutionary drama among all creatures is included within the suffering, abandonment, and confusion of the Passion and Holy Saturday. She writes, “Yet it is also equally possible to extend the existential burden that we understand that Christ was accepting to include not just human sin in isolation, but also the negative weight of evils as understood in terms of evolved creaturely being as such.”²⁵ Deane-Drummond understands the sacrificial, self-emptying love of God, as poured out on the Cross as inclusive of the result of all the effects of evil that have taken place within the created order. At this point in her writing, it becomes unclear what

²² Hans Urs von Balthasar. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 7, *Theology: The New Covenant*, trans. Brian McNeil, C.R.V. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 316. Cited by Deane-Drummond in *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 138.

²³ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 140. See also *GL* 1, 35, as well as Stephen Fields, “The Beauty of the Ugly: Balthasar, the Crucifixion, Analogy and God.” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 2 (2007): 172-183.

²⁴ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 184-185. Interior quotation from Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama* vol. 4, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994), 334-335.

²⁵ Deane-Drummond. *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, 185.

Deane-Drummond means when she speaks of “evil” as present within the natural world as somehow distinct from human sin. The traditional distinction between moral and natural evil is relevant here. Moral evil is that evil which human beings do in relation to God and one another that involves will and a greater sense of agency than in the rest of creation. What is traditionally understood as natural evil comes, for example, through the elimination of a species based upon various factors of co-operation and competition without the presence of full will or agency as that in human beings. Yet, what Deane-Drummond speaks about in terms of natural evil brings up the deeper question of what meaning, if any, redemption has for *all* of creation. Created nature does not share in redemption merely of its own accord, but rather in relation to the freedom of the children of God who are saved through the redemption of Christ. Saint Paul writes,

For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.²⁶

While the internal workings of nature are not understood to be “morally evil” in the same sense that we might understand the human ‘no’ to God (i.e. sin) to be so, creation still remains unfulfilled in itself. If what Paul writes is accurate, then creation itself participates in the “glorious freedom of the children of God” in some way. Both non-human creation and the children of God “groan,” waiting for the redemption that Christ brings about in its fullness at the end of time. It is an eschatological redemption that comes about through Christ, for the sake of His sisters and brothers. Following the Pauline text from Romans, all of creation *somehow*

²⁶ Romans 8:19-23 [New American Bible].

participates in this salvation of humanity. Although it is difficult to say *how* or *why* creation has been “made subject to futility,” there, at least, appears to be a relationship here between the *bodies* of Christians and creation itself in respect to fulfillment in eschatological redemption. I believe that it is at this slightly ambiguous place that the discussion of Deane-Drummond takes place. Neither is it the case that natural evil is identical to human moral evil nor is it the case that there is a complete dissimilarity between the redemption that shall come about for the human bodies of the children of God and the rest of creation, to which human bodies remain deeply interconnected here and now. Creation awaits the redeemed human fulfillment in Christ in some form *through and with* human beings as they are pneumatologically animated, and insofar as humans share in Christ’s suffering and death. If “creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God,” and if there is “hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God,” it can be seen that somehow there is a connection between creation and redemption through the connection of humanity redeemed in Jesus Christ. It is not moral evil that one animal eats another for survival, yet there remains something unfulfilled about the relations among all of creation particularly in relation to death. If creation shares in the fulfillment of the children of God, then we can ask what it might mean for the rest of creation that Christ will bring about a new heaven and a new earth where “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.”²⁷ This new order will certainly look quite different from the meaningless and sterile first-world “tearless universe” that Życiński cites (see next paragraph). In a deeply theological framework, love is deeply intertwined with suffering in this world, giving it meaning through Christ’s own suffering and death. While the

²⁷ Revelation 21:4.

full eschatological reality remains beyond what eye has seen or ear heard, there remains the recognition that “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is.” Most fully at the end of all things (and intimated in small ways even now), Christ’s action opens the way for a new way of being, living beyond a purely naturalistic perspective. Since the full realization of all creation is found in the one “through Whom all things came to be,”²⁸ it is likely that there would be a real effect upon all of creation through His Incarnation. Further, it is noteworthy that Deane-Drummond speaks of “self-emptying, kenotic love” as “the true form grounding all intra-worldly beauty” in Balthasar’s account” (see citation 23 above). There may be a meaningful connection between the emptiness that will be fulfilled in creation, and the self-emptying form of beauty that we find in Christ (kenotic love). If this connection is real, then beauty in creation appears even more intimately intertwined with Christ’s form of being by its crying out, as if somehow also ‘empty.’ Creation’s groaning even brings to mind Christ’s response to those who try to halt all the human celebration at Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem: “I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!”²⁹ The close relationship between Jesus Christ’s saving work of redemption for the sake of humanity seems to reach to the core of *all* being in *all* creation. The relationship that Saint Francis of Assisi maintained with creation might show something about the possible connection, even now, that is possible through the Spirit of God drawing all creation together. To be fair to her account, Deane-Drummond hopes to stretch the conversation beyond seeing all of creation as merely dependent upon humanity as a means. This is a complex question that has deeper possible routes of exploration through the relationship of Christ directly with all of creation as its Source of being. Nevertheless, since human beings are part of that same creation, the relationship between the groaning of all creation and the groaning of the children of

²⁸ John 1:3.

²⁹ Luke 19:36-40.

God redeemed in Christ must be considered through, and take into serious account, the mystery of human freedom in response to the call of Christ into light and new life in God. In this section, we looked at Balthasar's beauty in the form of Christ and how the Christological-Trinitarian action of kenotic love takes upon itself and grounds all earthly beauty by Christ taking upon himself the "ugly" effects of evil in suffering and death for the sake of all creation.

In the final section of this paper, we will look to the theologians Elizabeth Johnson and Józef Życiński for other perspectives and critiques concerning the issue of evil and suffering in relation to biological evolution given in Deane-Drummond. In her new book, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love*, Elizabeth Johnson offers an ecological vision of evolution 'from below,' considering intimately the experience of all of creation especially in relation to the ecological crises of our present day. While also commending Deane-Drummond for her scholarship, Johnson offers a slight critique of her perspective concerning theodicy in relation to all creatures. She writes, "Celia Deane-Drummond thoughtfully argues in *Christ and Evolution* that to say suffering is necessary, as Peacocke does, is to court the danger of *justifying* it," emphasizing that what "[w]e need [is] to address suffering in a way that gives us a moral imperative to seek its amelioration, not reconcile us with it."³⁰ Johnson believes that Deane-Drummond conflates the "ethical" task, which truly should be upheld by human beings in their care for creatures, with the "biological" issue that the problem of "pain, suffering, and death existed long before *homo sapiens* emerged."³¹ Johnson seems to be highlighting what she finds to be Deane-Drummond's slight (albeit unintentional) anthropocentrism in terms of human responsibility for pain and suffering in all of creation. She writes, "Take humans out of the picture, and pain, suffering, and death will continue unabated for other species. That is the issue

³⁰ Elizabeth Johnson. *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 188.

³¹ Johnson. *Ask the Beasts*, 188-189.

Darwin's work presents. It needs to be addressed on its own terms."³² The late Polish Archbishop of Lublin, Józef Życiński, offers a helpful account of God in a world with evil and suffering, along similar lines of the discussion from Johnson and Deane-Drummond. He writes,

How would a world free from suffering and a society to which the tears of pain are foreign look? Would it not be some kind of sterile universe closer to plastic imitations than to our experience of the drama of being? Would not societies free from diseases and natural disasters call to mind those Western societies in which—after the elimination of the problems of developing societies—the fundamental problem turned out to be a feeling of boredom, a sense of emptiness, a loss of meaning, a problem all the more painful because it is not recognized as a problem?³³

Życiński questions the uproar against suffering (as such) as possibly misguided, at least when taken as a larger societal response to the basic human condition. He certainly recognizes the complexity of the issue, and the real moral obligations that human beings have to care for those who suffer, including the alleviation of such burdens in the here-and-now. Like many other authors on theology and biological evolution, Życiński highlights the immanence of God within creation as well as the understanding of God's kenosis in Jesus Christ as an understanding that can assist human reflection on the complex issue of evil and suffering by offering us an example to take up through co-operation with God in the divine plan of self-emptying love.³⁴

Paradoxically, that which seemed to be a success at the biological level of competition turns out to be less important in the view of the newly blessed, which is what the weak, the meek, the merciful, the weeping, and those devoid of spectacular successes in the struggle for survival prove to be. On this view, the development of nature and the development of human culture receive their final meaning thanks to the drama of Golgotha. ...Christ did not eliminate suffering from the lives of the inhabitants of Galilee and Judaea who were near to Him; He only revealed its deepest meaning.³⁵

³²Johnson. *Ask the Beasts*, 189.

³³ Józef Życiński. *God and Evolution: Fundamental Questions of Christian Evolutionism*. trans. Kenneth W. Kemp and Zuzanna Maślanka. (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 184-185.

³⁴ Życiński. *God and Evolution*, 188-192.

³⁵ Życiński. *God and Evolution*, 193-194.

Similar to Elizabeth Johnson's understanding of the necessity of pain within the evolving world of natural species, Życiński offers a perspective that takes seriously suffering as an inherent part of reality in terms of uniting human beings to their *deepest meaning*. Success here means surviving and adapting to changing environments, yet the understanding of the meaning of the pain and death inherent in these evolutionary processes are seen anew in Christ's own words, and actions. He also makes the important distinction that such "pain consciously accepted" is "without masochistic inclinations."³⁶ With this admonition, kenosis comes into view again as a hope for ultimate (and even in this life partial) fulfillment of what remains broken, empty, and unfulfilled. Deane-Drummond relates this kenotic-hope to the Trinitarian (kenotic) love when she speaks of Balthasar's Christological focus upon the Passion of Jesus. It seems that all three theologians (Johnson, Życiński, and Deane-Drummond) have healthy, and still quite similar, understandings of God's relationship to the evolving world despite different backgrounds and different theological approaches.

Throughout this paper we have shifted from the relationship between theology and the natural sciences broadly considered to the most dramatic moment of Christological self-offering for all of creation in Celia Deane-Drummond's *Christ and Evolution*. Her dramatic approach to both theology and biological evolution allows for a deeper, more varied understanding of the unknown, ambiguous, and tragic elements within the historical evolution of various species. Through reflection upon wonder and wisdom, particularly in relation to Balthasar's theological account of beauty, Deane-Drummond gives us a helpful way of looking at our world in a way that allows for the revelation of beauty both in nature and in that form of beauty's Summit incarnate: Jesus Christ. I have found Deane-Drummond's work both biologically and

³⁶ Życiński. *God and Evolution*, 183.

theologically-informed in a way that is difficult to find among many theologians today. I think that her argument throughout the book lacked a bit of consistency through her attempt at bringing together various threads of thought from multiple theologians and biologists.

Nevertheless, I found her approach to the dialogue between theology and biological evolution as most able to maintain theological consistency in terms of the important distinction between God and nature, while still showing God as completely immanent within the world through the beautiful form of divine kenosis. It is this divine self-emptying which has been given to us, through our Lord Jesus Christ, so that all creation might share fully in the intra-Trinitarian love of God outpoured.

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